

May 20 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

leaders to move forward promptly with a peaceful process that enjoys broad public support.

The United States stands ready to support Indonesia as it engages in democratic reform.

Statement on the Conclusion of the World Trade Organization Meeting *May 20, 1998*

I am pleased and proud that the members of the World Trade Organization (“WTO”) have accepted my invitation to hold the 1999 WTO Ministerial meeting in the United States. This meeting will enable us to advance the ambitious agenda I laid out earlier this week to shape the world trading system to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Next year’s meeting will bring home for Americans the important stake that we all have in the global economy. And I welcome the decision by the WTO to ask United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky to chair that meeting.

In Geneva, we made important advances on our proposal to free the potential of electronic commerce. I am particularly pleased that the WTO members joined the United States in a standstill on any tariffs on electronic transmissions sent across national borders. We cannot allow discriminatory barriers to stunt the development of the most promising new economic opportunity in decades. This worldwide proposal builds on far-reaching agreements we reached

within the last week with the European Union and Japan.

As we build a trading system for the 21st century that honors our values and expands opportunity, we must do more to ensure that spirited economic competition among nations never becomes a race to the bottom, in environmental protections, consumer protections, or labor standards. Without such a strategy, we cannot build the necessary public support for continued expansion of trade. I will work to ensure that the WTO and other international institutions are more responsive to labor, the environment, consumers, and other interests so that we can build the public confidence we need in our trade expansion initiatives.

I want to thank Ambassador Barshefsky; Secretary Glickman; Ambassador Rita Hayes, our Ambassador to the WTO; and all the representatives of the U.S. business community and other participants in the Ministerial who worked to make this meeting a success.

Message to the Senate Returning Without Approval Legislation on Public Education in the District of Columbia *May 20, 1998*

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S. 1502, the “District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1998.”

If we are to prepare our children for the 21st Century by providing them with the best education in the world, we must strengthen our public schools, not abandon them. My agenda for accomplishing this includes raising academic standards; strengthening accountability; providing more public school choice, including public charter schools; and providing additional help to students who need it through tutors, mentors,

and after-school programs. My education agenda also calls for reducing class size, modernizing our schools and linking them to the Internet, making our schools safe by removing guns and drugs, and instilling greater discipline.

This bill would create a program of federally funded vouchers that would divert critical Federal resources to private schools instead of investing in fundamental improvements in public schools. The voucher program established by S. 1502 would pay for a few selected students to attend private schools, with little or no public accountability for how those funds are used, and